Identity, Leadership, and Success: A Study of Black Male Student-Athletes at the University of Missouri

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Proximity, Perspective, Prophetic

HANDS UP DONT SHOOT
#JusticeForMikeBrown
Curriculum: Mizzou Academic All American Board
Curriculum
Harry Edwards (2000) notes: “Black student-athletes from the outset have the proverbial ‘three strikes’ against them. They must contend, of course, with the connotations and social reverberations of the traditional ‘dumb jock’ caricature. But black student-athletes are burdened also with insidiously racist implications of the myth of ‘innate black athletic superiority,’ and the more blatantly racist stereotype of the ‘dumb Negro’—condemned by racial heritage to intellectual inferiority” (p. 126).
Research Question

• 1) How do Black male student-athletes at MU Athletics form identities and define success?

• 2) How do the life histories of Black male student-athletes at MU contribute to their identities, decisions, and leadership while at MU?
Methods & Data Sources

- Qualitative research methods were used.
- Participant interviews and observations were the narrative methods used.
- 52 black male student athletes at the University of Missouri
- One round of semi-structured interviews
- 60 hours of data were collected with interview lengths varying from 60-90 minutes.
- Participant observations in and around the athletic department (e.g. dining hall, practice, gameday)
Participant Selection

• “Network sampling” and “homogeneous sampling” (Wolff, 1999)

• Each man in the study was a current black male student athlete at MU:
  • Basketball (4 participants);
  • Baseball (1 participant);
  • Football (45 participants);
  • Track and field (2 participants)
Data Analysis

• Thematic analysis (Glesne, 2006)
  – Collect data
  – Code and categorize the data
  – Search and synthesize for patterns
  – Interpret the data

• Allowed for and examined “competing explanations and discrepant data” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 126)

• Data analysis and representation trustworthiness was attended to through member checks (Brenner, 2006; Lincoln & Denzin, 2003).
Conceptual Framework: Black Males Crossing-Over

Black Male Identity

- Border Crossing
- Black Male Experience
- Identity Formation
- Leadership Development
- Institutional Change
Voices, Victories & Visions
Findings: Forming & Flourishing Identities

**Forming Black Male Identities**
- Expectations
- Experiences/Experimentation
- Exposure
- Expression

*All of these variables can be both positive and negative (e.g. positive or negative exposure),*

**Flourishing Black Male Identities**
- Education (The What?)
  --e.g. Higher Ed
- Environment (The Where?)
  --e.g. your campus
- Economic Empowerment/Earning Power (The Why?)
- Emigration (To What End?)
The P.A.C.T

Preparation

Achievement

Transitions

Core
The PACT: Preparation
The **PACT**: Achievement

- Advocacy/Authenticity
- Academic Support
- Aspiration/Actualization
- Acceptance/Accurance
- Access/Acculturation
- Appreciation

Achievement requires...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The PACT: Core</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context/ Climate Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Communication/ Conversation Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cultural/ Color(ed) Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Curriculum/ Curricular Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Character/ Care Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Career Development Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chaplaincy/ Church Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cost Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Competency Audit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Commitment Audit</strong></td>
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Dr. Ty-Ron Douglas (2015): A Model of Meaningful Student Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Will &amp; The Skill</th>
<th>No Will but Untapped/Unknown Skill</th>
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<td>“I/we care about Black male student/athlete achievement and I/we possess urgency, capacity and clarity on how to engage individually and institutionally”</td>
<td>“There’s a lack of interest/engagement related to Black male student/athlete achievement but there are attendant resources that are not being utilized or recognized”</td>
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<td>“I/we care about Black male student/athlete achievement but I/we don’t know where or how to engage”</td>
<td>“I/we don’t know and I/we don’t care” “I/we don’t know that I/we don’t know that I/we don’t know”</td>
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The PACT: Transition

Time → Triage → Talents → Trust → Triumphs → Training → Trauma → Treatment → Truth(s) → Time
NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

• There is need for national leadership, ongoing research, and programmatic innovation related to how issues of identity—particularly, how racism and racialized tensions are impacting the student, athlete, sport administrative, campus-level administrative and national sport and university level experience.

• National and campus level training is needed for university administrators, coaches, and athletic department personnel in understanding and challenging systems of oppression (e.g. anti-racism training; implicit bias training)

• Hiring and supporting the work of Scholar(s) in Residence/ Player Engagement/ Social Responsibility Scholar-Practitioners at the university athletic-department level—individual(s) should serve as a bridge between the athletic department, campus level departments, university/system administration, and national and international liaisons and scholarly literature.
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